

From: THXSparrow@aol.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 2:14am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom It May Concern -

I wanted to express my opinion in hopes that there might be an appreciation for the value that Microsoft has brought to the market and this country, in particular. I have been designing computer software and hardware since 1981, having received a BSEE at that time. My experience is one of a user and a developer.

I would like to begin by referring to several benefits, I personally have received through Microsoft crashing of other companies proprietary offerings.

1. Under Bell Labs' thumb, we were required to pay \$70,000 for the Unix operating system. This was just for the OS. From my perspective, Microsoft, by turning the esoteric into the mundane, has repeatedly produced generation after generation of low cost standardized operating systems. Bells Labs didn't do this certainly, but sought to protect their super high margin software. IBM didn't do this, nor did Digital (DEC). Operating system software performs a magnitude more than it did two decades ago, yet, at \$200 to \$300, costs 1/350th of what it did. Conversely, automobile manufacturers during that same time, raised prices from approximately \$3000 to \$30,000, a ten-fold increase.

2. Under Adobe's thumb fonts and typefaces cost in the neighborhood of \$100 to \$200 per font. After Microsoft repeatedly was unable to get Adobe to open the PostScript Type 1 Font encoding, so others could have reasonably priced fonts, Microsoft created a competing standard called TrueType fonts and made this available to the world. Because of this single act, a thousand fonts can be bought today for \$29, rather than \$100,000. Adobe had the opportunity to act and they didn't. They used their power to extract the maximum amount they could from the customer. Microsoft did exactly the opposite - they exposed the fraud, created a counter standard, and gave it to the world. My first set of 25 Microsoft fonts cost me less than \$15 total, at a time when Adobe was still selling the equivalent PostScript fonts for over \$2500.

3. A lot more credit has been given to the one-trick pony designers of Netscape. Keep in mind that Netscape was formed, based on a single product - a Internet browser. This browser had been developed as a college project, as a variant on an existing freeware Mozilla browser. Microsoft was presumed to have had its heyday and to be in decline by investors, who gave Netscape a valuation of over \$13 billion dollars - more than Microsoft, at the time. This occurred in spite of the fact that Netscape had never had a positive cash-flow in its existence as a company and had only generated a gross revenue - if memory serves me correctly - of \$134,000. Clearly, investors did not have a clue what the technology was. Really, it was only a different way

of looking at the same data, comparable to using pie charts instead of text to demonstrate data. Microsoft understood that and integrated the browser into the operating system, as they had done previously with TCP LAN communications, modem support, text editors, memory managers, management tools, and so forth. Virtually every company, like Netscape, like Quarterdeck, like Procomm, like Banyan, each had products that began as one-trick ponies that eventually were incorporated into the Windows operating system. Instead of paying \$100 for the browser, \$240 for the modem software, \$99 for the memory manager, or \$695 for the LAN network software, Microsoft gave you all those things for FREE. In the process, they produced standards to which all companies could write software. In each case, they improved and mass produced what originally was a niche product, then they gave it to you for FREE. Like the breaking of Adobe's hammerlock on fonts, Microsoft also broke Oracle's gouging capability, by producing a competitive relational database product, MSSQL, at less than 100th of the cost of Oracle. If anything, Microsoft, by its competitive nature, has benefited the market and the user - and, yes, this has been at the expense of the one-trick wonders.

I could go on - Microsoft's ridiculously low pricing of products, their single-handed rescue of the American economy with super-productive computing tools and open standards, and so forth. Almost fifteen years ago, I heard Bill Gates first explain about Microsoft's vision of how diverse applications should be able to share data. We take this as such a trivial thing today, but this was such a major undertaking when it was first announced - because it had never been done. Today we routinely swap data between word processors, spreadsheets, Web pages, Photo editing packages, etc. without a thought about the complexities involved. It is all so trivial to accomplish, in many ways. But Microsoft created that, AND gave it away. Technology, by technology, they have had a singular vision of where computing should be going and brought us there, every time making it cheaper for us, the users.

When I started in graphics design, over 20 years ago, we routinely sold systems to produce books and newspaper display ads for \$50,000 to \$75,000 per workstation. Today that same workstation with 1000 times the processing speed and software with a magnitude more capability costs less than \$2,000 - complete. This could never have happened with Microsoft's unique standard-setting software. We all have benefited by Microsoft's continued innovations and cost-cutting products. The US economy has been in a dizzying spin, since the day that the Microsoft trials began. (Yes, I believe there is a correlation) The volatility will continue until we begin to allow Microsoft to develop the next computing generation's products, without continual legal harassment, for what is arguably a whirlwind of innovation and competitive business strategies. It is critical for the benefit of the United States economy. It is with enlightened self-interest that the US government should come to Microsoft's defense, because they have for the past 2 years been dangerously wounding the goose that lays the golden eggs.

George Horrocks

CC: microsoftsettlement@alexbrubaker.com@inetgw